CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A computer-implemented method to price a promotional product, the method including:

generating a user interface that facilitates input of specification information concerning the promotional product, the specification information including product information identifying a base product to be decorated and decoration manufacturing process information identifying a process whereby a decoration is applied to the base product;

receiving the specification information concerning the promotional product; and

automatically calculating a price for the promotional product utilizing the product information and the decoration manufacturing process information,

wherein the user interface further provides a visual representation of the promotional product having the decoration applied thereto and according to the decoration manufacturing process.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein the specification information includes decoration position information identifying a position on the base product to which to apply a decoration, and the automatic calculation of the price for the promotional product is performed utilizing the product information, the decoration position information and the decoration manufacturing process information.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the specification information includes decoration appearance information, and wherein the user interface facilitates identification of a decorative image that comprises part of the decoration appearance information.

4.   The method of claim 3 wherein the user interface facilitates uploading of the decorative image to a visualization server.

5.   The method of claim 3 wherein the user interface facilitates selection of the decorative image from a plurality of the decorative images stored at a visualization server.

6.   The method of claim 2 wherein the user interface facilitates visual specification of at least the decoration position information.

7.   The method of claim 6 wherein the user interface presents a positioning grid to facilitate the visual specification of the decorative position information.

8.   The method of claim 1 wherein the user interface presents a list of base products and facilitates user selection of the base product from the list of base products.

9.   The method of claim 8 wherein the user interface presents a thumbnail image of a plurality of base products included within the list of base products when presenting the list of base products.

10.   The method of claim 1 including storing decoration area information in conjunction with product information concerning the base product, the decoration area

information specifying a size of an area on a surface of the base product to which the decoration may be applied.

11.   The method of claim 1 wherein the automatic calculation of the price for the promotional product includes utilizing a decorative image, representative of the decoration to be applied to the base product, to determine a decoration area, and calculating the price utilizing the decoration area.

12.   The method of claim 11 wherein the determination of the decoration area includes identifying a number of occupied pixels within the decorative image occupied by artwork representative of the decoration, and determining the decoration area based on the number of occupied pixels.

13.   The method of claim 1 wherein the automatic calculation of the price for the promotional product includes determining a decoration price per unit area for the decoration manufacturing process, and calculating a decoration charge based on the decoration price per unit area.

14.   The method of claim 13 wherein the decoration manufacturing process is an embroidery manufacturing process, and the decoration price per unit area is based upon an average number of stitches per unit area.

15.   The method of claim 14 wherein the decoration price per unit area is stored in conjunction with the product information.

16.   The method of claim 1 wherein the user interface facilitates user specification of a size of the decorative image.

17.   The method of claim 16 wherein the user interface presents a plurality of predetermined size options for the decorative image for user selection to thereby specify the size of the decorative image.

18.   The method of claim 16 wherein the user interface displays the decorative image according to a default image size, and facilitates user modification of the default image size.

19.   The method of claim 1 wherein the automatic calculation of the price for the promotional product includes determining a unit price based on the product information identifying the base product to which the decoration is to be applied, and calculating a unit charge based on the unit price.

20.   The method of claim 19 wherein the product information includes any one of a group of product characteristics including product type, product color, and product size.

21.   The method of claim 19 wherein the user interface facilitates the input of quantity information indicating a quantity of the promotional products, and wherein the automatic calculation of the price includes calculating the unit price based on the quantity of promotional products.

22.   The method of claim 1 wherein the automatic calculation of the price of the promotional product includes calculating a setup charge based on the decoration manufacturing process.

23.   The method of claim 22 wherein the decoration manufacturing process is an embroidery manufacturing process, and the setup charge comprises a digitizing charge for digitization of a decoration image representing the decoration to be applied to the base product.

24.   The method of claim 1 wherein the automatic calculation of the price of the promotional product includes calculation of a tax charge.

25.   The method of claim 1 wherein the automatic calculation of the price of the promotional product includes calculation of a shipping charge.

26.   The method of claim 1 wherein the automatic calculation of the price of the promotional product includes summing a unit charge based on the base product to which the decoration is to be applied, a decoration charge based on the decoration to be applied to the base product, a setup charge based on the decoration manufacturing process, a tax charge and a shipping charge.

27.   The method of claim 26 including generating a quote user interface to present the price for the promotional product.

28.   The method of claim 27 wherein the quote user interface presents the unit charge, the decoration charge, the setup charge, the tax charge and the shipping charge.

29.   The method of claim 26 wherein the quote user interface includes at least a portion of the specification information concerning the promotional product.

30. The method of claim 1 wherein the decoration manufacturing process includes any one of a group of manufacturing processes including an embroidery manufacturing process, a silk-screen manufacturing process, and an engraving manufacturing process.

31. A system to automatically price a promotional product, the system including:

a database to store promotional product options; and

a visualization server to:

generate a user interface that facilitates the user-specification of promotional product options pertaining to the promotional product, the promotional product options including product information identifying a base product and decoration manufacturing process information identifying a process whereby a decoration is applied to the base product; and

automatically calculate a price for the promotional product utilizing the product information and the decoration manufacturing process information,

wherein the user interface further provides a visual representation of the promotional product having the decoration applied thereto according to the decoration manufacturing process.

32. The system of claim 31 wherein the promotional product options include decoration position information identifying a position on the base product to which to apply a decoration, and the visualization server is to automatically calculate the price for

the promotional product utilizing the product information, the decoration position information and the decoration manufacturing process information.

33.   The system of claim 31 wherein the promotional product options include decoration appearance information, and wherein the user interface facilitates identification of a decorative image that comprises part of the decoration appearance information.

34.   The system of claim 33 wherein the user interface facilitates uploading of the decorative image to the visualization server for storage in the database.

35.   The system of claim 33 wherein the database stores a plurality of decorative images, and the user interface facilitates selection of the decorative image from the plurality of the decorative images stored in the database.

36.   The system of claim 31 wherein the user interface facilitates visual specification of at least the decoration position information.

37.   The system of claim 36 wherein the user interface presents a positioning grid to facilitate the visual specification of the decorative position information.

38.   The system of claim 31 wherein the database stores information concerning a plurality of base products, and the user interface presents the plurality of base products and facilitates the user selection of the base product from the plurality of base products.

39.   The system of claim 38 wherein the user interface presents a thumbnail image of each of the plurality of base products when presenting the plurality of base products for user selection.

40.   The system of claim 31 wherein the database stores decoration area information in conjunction with product information concerning the base product, the decoration area specifying a size of an area on a surface of the base product to which the decoration may be applied.

41.   The system of claim 31 wherein the visualization server utilizes a decorative image, representative of the decoration to be applied to the base product, to determine a decoration area, and to calculate the price utilizing the decoration area.

42.   The system of claim 41 wherein the visualization server identifies a number of occupied pixels within the decorative image occupied by artwork representative of the decoration, and determines the decoration area based on the number of occupied pixels.

43.   The system of claim 31 wherein the visualization server determines a decoration price per unit area for the decoration manufacturing process, and calculates a decoration charge based on the decoration price per unit area.

44.   The system of claim 43 wherein the decoration manufacturing process is an embroidery manufacturing process, and the decoration price per unit area is based upon an average number of stitches per unit area.

45.   The system of claim 44 wherein the database stores the decoration price per unit area in conjunction with the product information.

46.   The system of claim 31 wherein the user interface facilitates user specification of a size of the decorative image.

47.   The system of claim 46 wherein the user interface presents a plurality of predetermined size options for the decorative image for user selection to thereby specify the size of the decorative image.

48.   The system of claim 46 wherein the user interface displays the decorative image according to a default image size, and facilitates user modification of the default image size.

49.   The system of claim 31 wherein the visualization server determines a unit price based on the product information for the base product to which the decoration is to be applied based, and calculates a unit charge based on the unit price.

50.   The system of claim 49 wherein the product information includes any one of a group of product characteristics including product type, product color, and product size.

51.   The system of claim 49 wherein the user interface facilitates the input of quantity information indicating a quantity of the promotional products, and wherein the visualization server calculates the unit price based on the quantity of promotional products.

52.   The system of claim 31 wherein the visualization server calculates a setup charge based on the decoration manufacturing process.

53. The system of claim 52 wherein the decoration manufacturing process is an embroidery manufacturing process, and the setup charge comprises a digitizing charge for digitization of a decoration image representing the decoration to be applied to the base product.

54. The system of claim 31 wherein the visualization server calculates a tax charge.

55. The system of claim 31 wherein the visualization server calculates a shipping charge.

56. The system of claim 31 wherein the visualization server sums a unit charge based on the base product to which the decoration is to be applied, a decoration charge based on the decoration to be applied to the base product, a setup charge based on the decoration manufacturing process, a tax charge and a shipping charge.

57. The system of claim 56 wherein the visualization server generates a quote user interface to present the price for the promotional product.

58. The system of claim 57 wherein the quote user interface presents the unit charge, the decoration charge, the setup charge, the tax charge and the shipping charge.

59. The system of claim 57 wherein the quote user interface displays the promotional product options selected by a user via the user interface.

60. The system of claim 31 wherein the decoration manufacturing process includes any one of a group of manufacturing processes including an embroidery manufacturing process, a silk-screen manufacturing process, and an engraving manufacturing process.

61.   A machine-readable medium storing a sequence of instructions that, when executed by a machine, cause the machine automatically to price a promotional product by a method including:

generating a user interface that facilitates input of specification information concerning the promotional product, the specification information including product information identifying a base product and decoration manufacturing process information identifying a process whereby a decoration is applied to the base product;

receiving the specification information concerning the promotional product; and

automatically calculating a price for the promotional product utilizing the product information and the decoration manufacturing process information,

wherein the user interface further provides a visual representation of the promotional product having the decoration applied thereto according to the decoration manufacturing process.

62.   A system to automatically price a promotional product, the system including:

first means for storing promotional product options; and

second means for:

generating a user interface that facilitates the user-specification of

promotional product options pertaining to the promotional product, the

promotional product options including product information identifying a base

product and decoration manufacturing process information identifying a process

whereby a decoration is applied to the base product; and

automatically calculating a price for the promotional product utilizing the

product information and the decoration manufacturing process information,

wherein the user interface further provides a visual representation of the

promotional product having the decoration applied thereto according to the decoration

manufacturing process.